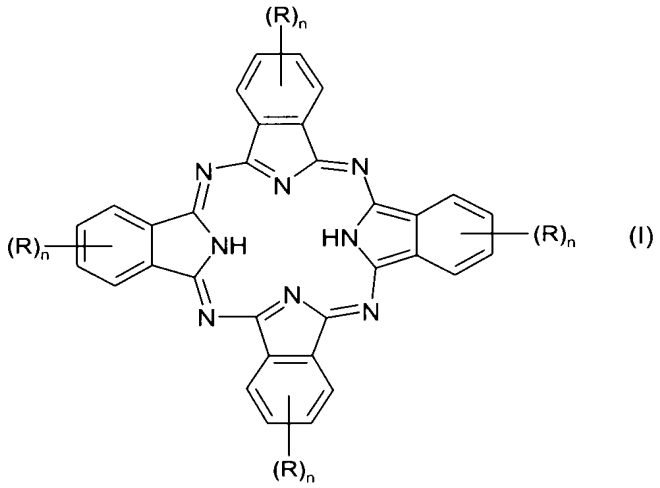
IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

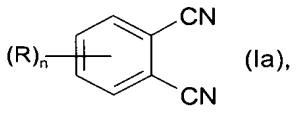
Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A process for the preparation of a metal-free phthalocyanine of formula I



(I)

the process comprising,

converting an ortho-phthalodinitrile of the formula Ia



(Ia),

to the metal-free phthalocyanine of formula I in an inert solvent with a boiling point of at least 120°C (at standard pressure) in the presence of ammonia and an alkali metal hydroxide,

wherein, in formula I or Ia, the variable n can adopt values of 1, 2, 3 or 4,

wherein in formula I or Ia, the R radicals denote a five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen,

wherein the five- or six-membered saturated ~~heterycyclic~~ heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is bonded

via a ring nitrogen atom to the benzene ring,

wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can, optionally, comprise one or two additional nitrogen atoms or an additional oxygen or sulfur atom, and

wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can be, optionally, substituted by one or two C_1-C_8-alkyl groups.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the inert solvent is selected from the group consisting of ethylene glycol, diethylene glycol, propylene glycol, 1,2-butanediol, 1,3-butanediol, 1,4-butanediol, 2,3-butanediol, mono- (C_1-C_4-alkyl) ethers of the abovementioned diols, di-(C_1-C_4-alkyl) ethers of the abovementioned diols, 2-[di(C_1-C_4-alkyl)amino]ethanol and 3-[di(C_1-C_4-alkyl)amino]propanol.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the inert solvent is selected from the group consisting of 3-dimethylaminopropanol and n-butyl glycol.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal hydroxide is selected from the group consisting of sodium hydroxide, potassium hydroxide, and combinations thereof.

Claim 5 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein n in the formulae I and Ia adopts the value 1.

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 1, wherein the R radicals denote a six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen,

wherein the six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is substituted by one or two C_1-C_4-alkyl groups, and

wherein, optionally, the six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen can comprise an additional nitrogen atom.

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): The process according to claim 6, wherein the R radicals denote a piperidine or piperazine ring substituted by one or two C_1-C_4-alkyl groups, wherein the piperidine or piperazine ring is bonded to the benzene ring via a ring nitrogen atom of the piperidine or piperazine ring.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, further comprising an alkali metal carbonate.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 8, wherein the alkali metal carbonate is selected from the group consisting of sodium carbonate, potassium carbonate, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): The process of claim 1, wherein the process is carried out ~~the converting is conducted~~ at a temperature of from 140 °C to 170 °C.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is substituted by one or two C_1-C_8-alkyl groups.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is a five-membered saturated heterocyclic ring.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five- or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen is a six-membered saturated cyclic heterocyclic ring.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five- or six-membered

saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises one additional nitrogen atom.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises two additional nitrogen atoms.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises an oxygen atom.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The process of claim 1, wherein the five-or six-membered saturated heterocyclic ring comprising nitrogen further comprises a sulfur atom.